

English

EMMA GREALY

LEAVING CERTIFICATE

5th Year HIGHER LEVEL

2021/22

Approaching Paper 1



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APPROACHING PAPER 1

English Paper 1 is the most challenging of the whole Leaving Certificate Examination simply because it is the first. A sensible coherent strategy is vital. A good performance in the opening paper of the examination will put you in a positive frame of mind to tackle the prescribed material in Paper II.

- ✓ Begin by choosing your essay title. This strategy will maximise the amount of time available to gather ideas for your chosen composition. Relevant ideas will occur to you as you are engaging with the selected texts. Make a note of these as they occur to you on a rough work page in your exam booklet.
- ✓ Next, select the Text B with which you feel most comfortable e.g. keeping a diary, writing a formal letter, etc.
- ✓ Having selected your three options begin by answering Text A. This approach has a number of advantages. Answering a specific set of text based questions at the onset when you are still 'cold' is much easier than composing. It is reactive rather than a pro-active task and does not require creative thinking. There is also a significant psychological benefit in answering Text A first-the 'feel good' factor. Having answered the comprehension questions you will then approach the half-composition in Text B and the subsequent full-composition in Section II in a confident frame of mind (with points on board).

- ✓ REMEMBER THAT YOU CANNOT CHOOSE QUESTIONS A & B FROM THE SAME COMPREHENSION.

TIMING

PAPER 1: 170 MINUTES

- PRE-READING: 5 MINUTES
- QUESTION A: 35 MINUTES (10 MINS i & ii, 15 mins iii)
- QUESTION B: 35 MINUTES
- ESSAY: 90 MINUTES
- RE-CHECKING PAPER: 5 MINUTES



Approaching the Reading Comprehension

“The limits of my language mean the limits of my world”. Wittgenstein.

- Always read the comprehension carefully, underlining key points where necessary. Use relevant language to illustrate your point e.g. This suggests/demonstrates/highlights
- Use the author’s surname. NEVER REFER TO THE AUTHOR BY HIS OR HER FIRST NAME.
- Use the present tense not the present continuous e.g. ‘Winterson demonstrates...’ INSTEAD OF ‘Winterson is demonstrating....’
- Always reference the text in your answer.
- Be clear and illustrate your point clearly.
- Answer the question asked.
- There is no easy option as all three texts are carefully graded to ensure the same level of difficulty.
- An undirected reading of a text before looking at the questions wastes valuable time.
- In choosing which text to engage with, it is a good idea to look at the questions. If you like the questions, that is half the battle.
- It is important to read all three questions before beginning your answers as this will avoid information overlap.
- Do not attempt to answer all three questions on the strength of one single reading.
- Read the text (or the section indicated by the question) before attempting each answer.
- In answering each of the questions (i) (ii) (iii) on the text do not depend on your memory. Pencil in a code letter on the margin of the text to identify the relevant information i.e. ‘p’ for personality of the author, ‘s’ for style.
- Vary the evidence from the text in each question i.e. Avoid repeating the same points in all three answers.



Problems Students have with Text A

- Questions are not always correctly interpreted. Read all three parts of the question before you begin as this will avoid wasteful duplication and/or overlapping of information.
- Identify clearly what is required and answer relevantly, using information which is to be found in the text, or which can be reasonably deduced from the text.
- Students frequently fail to follow through in their answers. In answering a question on what is revealed of the author's personality, students often simply list personal qualities (usually accurately) but do not support their conclusions with relevant evidence from the text. In answering why a passage is effective or powerful, many students quote (again relevantly) from the text, but do not explain what the effect is and how it is achieved, or why the piece is powerful in provoking a specific emotional response in the reader, or in persuading him/her. Students frequently do not engage with the text. Answers should always be text based.

POSSIBLE COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

What is most important in the comprehension section is that you engage with the text. You may be asked to examine it in a number of ways.

- The language of the piece.
- The author's opinion/personality.
- The character (s) in the text.
- Your overall impression of the piece, the tone, the environment, the mood.

Keeping these aspects in mind, you should make use of the relevant language that you may need. In preparing for Paper I you will therefore need to familiarise yourself with various modes of language and the devices used in writing.



MODES OF LANGUAGE

There are five basic modes of language

1. Information.
2. Argument.
3. Persuasion.
4. Narration.
5. Aesthetic.

Information

The language of information requires that information that be communicated in the minimum of words. There must be no word-padding or word-repetition. Imagery and persuasive techniques should be avoided. The language used must be absolutely clear. Genres in this category which should be practised for your question b are: memos, reports, scientific commentaries.

EXAMPLE: 'The number of people from the Republic of Ireland visiting Northern Ireland has increased significantly since the cease-fire and is expected to grow 35 percent this year'.

Argument

The language of argument requires a careful selection of evidence (involving discrimination and evaluation). Ideas must be logically structured in order to achieve coherence. Argument must be distinguished from opinion. Argument is objective, deals in facts, uses demonstrable evidence, is impersonal and leads to interpretations. Opinion involves subjective preferences, deals in assertions, makes assumptions, is personal and also leads to interpretations. Argument can be deductive (states a general principle, makes a specific statement, draws or deduces a conclusion from these). E.g All the planets in the solar system are spheres, the earth is a planet in the solar system. Therefore the earth is a sphere.

An inductive argument is based on specific items of evidence and instances from which a conclusion is drawn:

There are many reasons for asserting the earth is round. Photographs of the earth from space show it to be a sphere. If one travelled across the earth always moving in a straight line and in the same direction one would return to the exact place from which one began. Finally in looking in any direction



one's view is limited by the horizon which suggests the earth is curving away equally on all sides. From these three facts one can conclude that the earth is round.

Opinion is the expression of a viewpoint based on assumptions, subjective reasons and interpretations. It can be well-informed and coherent or it can be badly informed and incoherent.

1. County Clare is the most attractive county for tourists. It has a unique and beautiful scenery, e.g. The Burren. It has a great tradition of Irish music. Its people are friendly and hospitable. Clare is the most attractive county for tourists.

2. I think Ronaldinho is the best footballer. He comes from Brazil where everyone is good at football. He earns a lot of money and is nice to his family.

Persuasion

The language of persuasion is similar to the language of argument yet it differs from it. Both modes have the purpose of persuading someone and changing someone's mind on an issue. However, while the two are not mutually exclusive, they employ different techniques. Argument relies on rational, logical approach-suggestion, innuendo, anecdote, pressure phrases, use of 'we', 'you', repetition, persuasive techniques. The language of persuasion is characteristic of people who seek to achieve and/or retain power in the same specific area. A persuasive text focuses on a target audience and will attempt to manipulate the feelings and imagination of that audience so as to secure agreement and consent.

Following a hugely successful, sell-out run on Broadway, Fiona Shaw and Deborah Warner return to Ireland to present their breathtaking staging of T.S Eliot's epic poem of modern civilisation, the Waste Land. In this unique theatrical interpretation, Fiona Shaw takes her audience through Eliot's complex poetic landscape in one swift, electrifying and unforgettable burst. The poem makes use of a rich variety of voices and situations. Shaw gives each of them a vital and immediate presence on stage. First performed in old disquette building at the Kunsten Festival des Arts in Brussels (1995). The Waste Land was seen in the Magazine Fort, Phoenix Park during the Dublin Theatre Festival later that year. Since then Warner and Shaw have taken the production to Paris, Montreal and New York where it has been greeted with standing ovations and rave reviews.

For anyone with any interest in great writing, illuminated and clarified by superb acting and directing. The Waste Land is a must.



Narration

A narrative tells a story. This story may take the form of a novel, a drama or a poem. Narratives also include anecdotes, gossip, titbits or scandal which are an integral part of everyday conversation. A story must have a coherent overall shape-a beginning, middle and an end.

A story must have a setting which should be clearly visualised for the reader's imagination to feed upon and enable him/her to engage with the world of the text. Finally a story must have characters who are fully realised and credible, not shadowy and unconvincing.

Aesthetic

The language of aesthetic involves the use of language as a medium of literary interpretation. It involves consideration of the writer's use of diction, sentence structure, imagery, sound and persuasive techniques. It will question why a text is written in a particular way (first/third person narrative, use of flashback) what kind of world the writer creates and for what purpose. The mode of the aesthetic will also involve a consideration of the writer's point of view and of the themes and issues which are raised (and possibly resolved) in the world of the text.

THE STYLE OF THE PIECE

Style is the sum total of all the verbal techniques which a speaker or writer uses to persuade his audience or readers to accept his point of view. The characteristic style of a literary work or a writer may be analysed in terms of the following:

- 1) Diction or distinctive choice of words. This element of style can be examined under such headings as the degree to which a writer's vocabulary is:
 - Abstract or concrete e.g. 1. "So great was the bravery of the army..." 2. The soldiers were so brave...
- 2) Formal or Conversational
 - Clergyman/Priest
 - Edifice/Building
 - Aperture/Opening
- 3) Technical or Common
 - Crisis/Turning point
 - Denouement/Ending



4) Literal or Figurative

- That boy is clever/ that boy is an encyclopedia.

Imagery

This element includes non-figurative images and figurative images. An image may be visual (eye), olfactory (nose), tactile (touch), aural (hearing), gustatory (taste), kinesthetic (movement) or abstract (intellect).

In non-figurative imagery the picture is created in the reader's imagination through the use of vivid verbal detail.

e.g It was a calm, moonlit night. The full moon beamed down and the stars twinkled in the clear sky. The breeze sighed softly through the leaves of the palm trees. The waves lapped gently on the shore. The young lovers walked hand in hand on the shimmering sand.

In figurative imagery the picture is created in the the reader's mind through the use of similes, metaphors and symbols. A simile is an imaginative comparison between two things that the reader would not normally think of comparing, and is introduced by 'like' or 'as'. E.g. My love is like a red rose./ I wandered lonely as a cloud.

A metaphor is a simile with the 'like' or 'as' omitted e.g. My love is a red rose.

A symbol is a sign. It is an object, place, person or gesture which represents something else. Some symbols such as the cross or colours are public. Others however are personal or private-the scarecrow for Yeats, the bee-box for Plath, the fish for Bishop, the Amish rug for Longley, Lonnese for Thomas Hardy.

Sound

This element can be used effectively to describe character, establish setting, create mood.

Onomatopoeia or echoism describes a word, or combination of words, whose sound seems to resemble the non-verbal sound it describes e.g. hiss, buzz, bang, rattle.

Onomatopoeia may take the form of euphony (language which is smooth, pleasant and musical to the ear) e.g She a was sweet, gentle child. It may also take the form of cacophony (language that is harsh, discordant and unmusical). E.g. He was an ignorant, rough truculent brute. In a broader sense



onomatopoeia also describes words or passages which seem to correspond to what they describe in size (huge, little) movement (slow), power (strong) as well as sound.

Alliteration is the repetition of initial consonants in a sequence of neighbouring words e.g. 'All marked with mute surmise my radiance rare and fathomless when I came back from Lyonesse with magic in my eyes'. Here the alliteration of 'm' consonants links Hardy's emotion with the thoughts of his observers.

Assonance is the repetition of identical vowel sounds in a sequence of neighbouring (stressed) words. In the previous quotation 'radiance rare' and 'my eyes' effectively captures the poet's happiness.

Sound can also be used positively or negatively as a persuasive device. 'The filthy state of the New York subway is cacophonously described 'splotched and stinking'. By contrast euphony capture the breathtaking loveliness of the Sahara desert, 'the subtle smells and the lonely beauty of a moon-silver desert.

Repetition is very effective in emphasising depth of feeling in despair the poet Hopkins cries out to the god he believes has abandoned him "Comforter, where, where is your comforting? Mary, mother of us, where is your grief?"

Anaphora (the deliberate repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive grammatical units) e.g We must accustom ourselves to the thought of arms, we must accustom ourselves to the sight of arms, we must accustom ourselves to the use of arms...

Persuasive or Rhetorical Techniques

The language of persuasion involves the use of a variety of persuasive/rhetorical devices by the writer designed to convince or impress the reader.

- (a) Rhetorical questions will not take 'yes' for an answer (unless there is a negative in the question). They pressurise the reader into giving the precise response which the writer wishes to evoke and so agree with his/her point of view:

Was it for this the wild geese spread

The grey wing upon every tide;

For this that all that blood was shed,

For this Edward Fitzgerald died,

And Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone,



All the delirium of the brave?

Do I not suffer? Am I not wronged? Should I not weep?

- (b) Loaded questions are a less subtle means of achieving the same effect, again pressurising the reader to give only the answer the asker wants:
- Surely....Surely not....You do, don't you...You don't, do you...
- (c) Examples of Pressure Phrases:
Everybody is aware...As a matter of fact...It is beyond doubt...It is a mistake to believe/suggest...As you all know...We can remember..We must not make the mistake of thinking...
- (d) Conceding a Point to the Opposition. This creates the impression of objectivity. Also, by deliberately making his task more difficult, the writer will enjoy a greater final triumph.
- (e) Praise followed by Criticism
If the reader swallows one, then he must swallow the other. This also creates the impression that the writer is objective and balanced.
- (f) The Mock-lament creates an illusion of sympathy and also of balance. The writer can then go on to launch his attack e.g. 'If only your son had applied himself to his studies, he could have obtained a great result in his Leaving Certificate but he...;
- (g) Innuendo is an indirect comment, usually disparaging. It says nothing directly, but can be devastating in undermining the reputation of the opposition and so damaging his argument. At the same time, it creates the impression that the writer is a person of integrity. E.g. 'I have heard stories from reliable sources about...I have it on good authority...He is not what he seems...But I am not going to say anymore...
- (h) The Effective Use of Non-Figurative and Figurative Images creates an impression in the reader's mind favourable to the writer's point of view e.g. 'Here are a few more decompensating-one is weeping on a wooden bench at Canal Street, another has wild hair and is spitting into a Coke can. One man who is de-compensation in a useful way has a bundle of brooms and is setting forth to sweep the whole of the changing area at Grand Central; another is scrubbing the stairs at 14th Street with scraps of paper. They drink, they scream, they gibber like monkeys.' This vivid description brings home to us the plight of those mentally-ill people who find refuge in the New York subway system.



USEFUL PHRASES FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS ON LANGUAGE

- (i) The Use of Expert Witnesses to support an argument can be extremely effective. However, some writers abuse this technique by claiming to express the views of people whom they could not possibly have canvassed-all motorists, all subway users, all travellers.
- (j) Cataloguing or Listing. This can be very effective in building up an overwhelming case for or against. E.g.
The New York subway has the longest rides of any subway in the world, the biggest stations, the fastest trains, the most track, the most passengers, the most police officers, It also has the filthiest trains, the most bizarre graffiti, the noisiest wheels, the craziest passengers, the wildest crimes.

Example 2: Onions followed by sausages, and were in turn followed by coriander and basil, oranges and chocolate, turning the train into a multi fragrant marketplace, full of music, song, cardsharks, fortune-tellers and the Hogarthian riff raff you get on Third World trains.

- (k) The writer's use of his own Personality as a persuasive technique:
- Engagement with the reader "I...you...we' makes it difficult to disagree with the writer. E.g 'If like me, you enjoy a bit of riff-raff, travel soon'.
 - Personal Anecdote is another way of opening up to the reader and makes it difficult for him to disagree with the writer. E.g As a boy of seven or eight, I was taken by my father to watch smoke-belching expresses roaring in and out of the Totley tunnel, on the outskirts of Sheffield and I experienced a passionate feeling of excitement.
 - Sense of Humour (non-aggressive humour, ability to laugh at himself, witty use of pun, hyberbole, irony, surprise turns) causes the reader to respond positively to the writer.
 - Nostalgia: every reader has pleasant memories of the apst and so we identify with the reader. The projection of himself as compassionate, caring, a person of integrity makes it very difficult for the reader to disagree with the writer's point of view.



Particularly for answering the comprehension question and may also be of use in answering the 'Unseen Poetry' question.

Descriptive Language

EXAMPLE QUESTION: What features of good descriptive writing can we see in the text?

- The author/poet creates a sense/a picture/ a vivid image through...
- The author/poet depicts/evokes/illustrates/conjures up/ says/describes/produces/draws on...
- The author personifies the...
- The author immerses us in a world of...
- The author fills the text/litters the text/sprinkles the text with...

Persuasive and Argumentative Language

EXAMPLE QUESTION: Palin opposes the segregation of the First and Third World, how do we know this?

Persuading for:

- We are persuaded/convinced that...
- The author/poet persuades/ staunchly believes/advocates/ argues for/implies/states/remarks/underlines/compliments/ comments/highlights/praises/promotes/glorifies...
- The author makes use ofto prove his point.
- The author impresses upon us the importance of ...

Arguing against:

- The author/poet criticises/derides/questions/laments/mourns /blames/undermines/opposes/mocks/argues against...
- The author uses a derisory tone to suggest...



Giving an Opinion

EXAMPLE QUESTION: What kind of character do you think Palin is?

- I believe...
- I think...
- It is clear/evident/obvious/undeniable/conceivable from _____ that...
- We notice/see/observe...
- What we can therefore conclude/deduce/understand from _____ is...



EXEMPLARS

THE FOLLOWING ANSWERS ARE EXEMPLARS FROM THE FROM DEPT. ED 2008

N.B. PLEASE SEE LC P1 TEXT 2 2008

(ii) What impression of the character of Eva Tyne is created in this extract? Support your answer with reference to the text. (15)

This extract gives a clear impression of the character of Eva Tyne. From reading it I gathered that Eva is spontaneous, a little naïve and also very adventurous.

It is evident that Eva is a very spontaneous person as she immediately jumps at the chance to purchase the violin. "That name was all it took and I was in the passenger seat of a battered car driving at speed over the East River to Alexander's apartment". This shows how Eva puts little thought into her actions beforehand, as she takes no time to stop and consider the consequences of her actions. Eva is completely acting on impulse as she races to Alexander's apartment and I feel this is proof of her spontaneous character.

I also think the extract gives the impression that Eva Tyne is a very naïve character. The piece gives clear evidence that Eva knows little to nothing about both the violin or its background and yet once she was "promised" its identity she starts "agreeing there and then to pay 600,000 dollars". By not asking any follow up questions and her obvious lack of consideration for possible pitfalls, the extract gives the impression to the reader that Eva is a very naïve individual who takes things at face value.

Eva Tyne is also shown to be an adventurous character in this extract. She seems to enjoy the high risk experience and is excited by the fact that she is not sure of what the outcome may be. Eva describes the feeling as "like sitting in a darkened cinema waiting for a horror movie to begin". In my opinion this gives the impression that she enjoys taking risks and has a highly imaginative adventurous personality.

It is clear from this extract that Eva Tyne's character acts on impulse, is slightly naïve and unquestioning and enjoys the thrill of risks.

Comment:

- Sustained focus on characteristics of Eva's character •
- Effective use of quotation throughout

Marks awarded ex 15: 15



(iii) One reviewer of the novel *Tenderwire* described it as “a compelling and well-written thriller”. From your reading of the extract, do you agree with this view? Refer to the text in support of your answer. (20)

Yes, I agree with the view that the novel ‘*Tenderwire*’ is both a “compelling” and “well-written” novel. The extract clearly shows the thrilling and suspenseful style of the novel which [was] created by a number of different techniques used.

Firstly, the author employs the use of rhetorical questions throughout the passage. This technique is used to focus the reader on the story and also to bring the reader into the mind and thoughts of Eva Tyne. By using rhetorical devices, the author is able to build anticipation and suspense by explicitly creating an atmosphere of tension. Eva constantly reassesses her actions and possible outcomes which gives the writing suspense. “How was I to transport it to Tompkins Square Park where I had arranged to meet Alexander?” “You might be arrested?” These questions contribute to the overall effect which makes it a compelling and well-written extract.

The author also employs the use of dialogue as a dramatic device. The well written dialogue between Eva and both Zach and Alexander makes this extract compelling as it makes the reader feel as though they are witnessing the action. “It’ll be seized within days of your performance”. The dialogue also adds to the thriller genre as the words of Zach are conflicting with the promises of Alexander. “It is the real thing, I promise you!” In my opinion this enhances the quality of the extract and makes it more interesting.

The author uses similes and metaphors along with well-written descriptive narrative to make the extract intriguing. The author describes the violin in a majestic way to emphasize its importance “holding it out like a cushion on which a crown is placed”. This, in turn, presented the thrilling “high risk” atmosphere of the story as Eva decides whether or not to purchase it. In my opinion, the authors use of excellent similes such as “flicker like fire” and “like two dead puppies” added greatly to the extract and made it compelling to read as it appealed to the imagination and was very cinematic. It is this cinematic quality that makes the story come alive and become so thrilling.

In my opinion these aspects contribute to what is, undoubtedly a thrilling and well-written novel.

Comment:

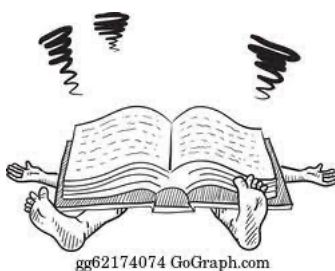
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Very good focus on relevant features of the writer’s style Structured response well supported by textual reference Expression slightly repetitive

39

Marks awarded ex 20: 19





FURTHER PRACTICE/KEY TIPS

- Practice the comprehension section as part of your study programme.
- Remember the **SIX** key tips:
 1. Read the questions
 2. Highlight the key words in the questions
 3. Read the comprehension with clear focus
 4. Read it a second time and possibly a third time
 5. Answer the questions
 6. Read over your answers. **HAVE YOU ANSWERED THE QUESTIONS ASKED?**





